

+WEEKLY SERMON

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Giving your all for Jesus

If you know me then you'll know that, as a former journalist, I know a good story when I see one; it's what I do!

Sometimes when someone asks me what I do for a living and I want a shorthand to describe my work I just say 'I'm a storyteller'. It fits. People love to read stories.

A few years ago now I remember reading about an amazing story that hit the headlines.

It was just before Christmas and was the kind of special tale that rears its head very occasionally.

A Preston art student found herself stranded in town in the early hours after losing her bank card and with no cash for a taxi. A homeless man, seeing her plight, offered her his last £3 to help get her home.

This astonishing gesture was subsequently rewarded many times over.

The student, who refused the money, later tracked the man down and set up an online charity account to raise money for him.

Writing on the fundraising page she said: "The more I spoke about him the more kind gestures I learnt about, such as him returning wallets untouched to pedestrians and offering his scarf to keep people warm.

"He has been homeless for seven months through no fault of his own and needs to get back on his feet, but cannot get work due to having no address. So that's when I decided to change this man's life and help him, as he has helped many others."

And help him she certainly did - raising more than £30,000.

The money helped to pay for a house deposit for the man and to ease the plight of other homeless people in the area. It is almost certainly not the outcome the homeless man expected when he offered the student his last £3.

But it begs the question ... who of us would part with ALL we have to help someone else?

It was only £3 you might say.

But it was everything to the homeless man. He offered her all he had in the world so she could get home safely, in exactly the same way as the widow we read about in the Bible ...

HEALTHY CHURCHES TRANSFORMING COMMUNITIES

In Mark's Gospel, chapter 12, verses 41-44, the widow gave all she had as an offering to God.

41 *Jesus sat down opposite the place where the offerings were put and watched the crowd putting their money into the temple treasury. Many rich people threw in large amounts. 42 But a poor widow came and put in two very small copper coins, worth only a few cents.*

43 *Calling his disciples to him, Jesus said, "Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others. 44 They all gave out of their wealth; but she, out of her poverty, put in everything—all she had to live on."*

God promises to bless us if we give our all to Him.

The homeless man's gesture was a totally selfless one and has certainly been blessed many times over.

It could so easily have been forgotten, but the subsequent windfall he has received as a result of the student's kindness and resourcefulness was well deserved and I do hope it set him on the road to a brighter future.

Ronnie Semley, Diocesan Communications Manager